Dreamscape [Remastered]

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Dreamscape [Remastered]

by Jana_Valker

Summary

Satsuki escapes the real world for one of her own making, one where she can have what she's lost. But as she get better and better at controlling her dream world, she loses her grasp on reality, to the point where there might just be one person who can save Satsuki... if she still wants to.

Unshamed Ryuuko/Satsuki. Unlike any other you have ever read.

Notes

I give you a warm welcome to Dreamscape! The idea came from a very old comic book story I read in my youth, and matured through years to become what you are about to read. I hope you will have fun chasing Satsuki through her dreamscape, just remember to bring a lifeline with you, and always watch your back, because when it's two people, and not one anymore, who's dreaming, who can say which one's real and which one's dream?

All in all, please leave a comment to let me know what you think of the story. It's the only way i can improve and the only way I ca reach you all.

Thank you.

Bivalve

Sunt geminae Somni portae, quarum altera fertur
cornea, qua veris facilis datur exitus umbris;
altera candenti perfecta nitens elephanto,
sed falsa ad caelum mittunt insomnia Manes.
Two gates the silent house of Sleep adorn;
Of polish'd ivory this, that of transparent horn:
True visions thro' transparent horn arise;
Thro' polish'd ivory pass deluding lies.
Vergil, *Aeneid*, vs. 893-896; translation by John Dryden

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Bivalve

In time, Satsuki would learn to tell dream and reality apart.

She blinked, stood up on her elbow, and looked around. The air smelled of salt and dried up her lips; the low, rolling sigh of tides as they washed the shore hummed its own rhyme. The sun's heat touched her skin with a kind pressure; she was wearing a simple swimsuit, white and lined blue, and before her, standing in front of the waves like a defying colossus, was Ryuuko, in a black swimsuit, lined red.

One of the things Satsuki had come to learn was that when she was dreaming she seldom spoke; and, in the dull, waking hours while time passed as if squeezed through a borehole and minutes were a ooze that crawled, little by little, towards the end of another day, she researched the somewhat rare phenomenon known as lucid dream, just to understand what was happening to her, what was happening to her mind. After a time, she began to play by the

rules of these odd places, knowing full well that she was in control of this universe, and she could wake up at any moment.

Any moment.

Ryuuko spoke.

“I can see the shore, sis.”

Satsuki smiled and nodded, waiting for Ryuuko to speak continue. She was wearing a pearl necklace that she didn't notice beforehand; the contour of her swimsuit seemed threadbare, hazy, like paint slowly washed away by water. She was getting better at painting her dreamscape, though.

“It's white and far, far away.”

Satsuki stood up, feeling the warm sand under her feet, and reached Ryuuko; she put her hands on her shoulders, and she was delighted by Ryuuko's soft skin.

“Nice.”

Ryuuko turned to look at her with a large smile on her face. Another of the signs Satsuki learned to recognize was that this Ryuuko never had her red streak on her hair. Her eyes were clearer, happier, they had seen less pain. Satsuki passed a hand through Ryuuko's hair and ruffled them gently.

“Come on, let's build a castle,” Satsuki said, and she and Ryuuko crouched down before the waves, and began to take large handfuls of wet sand, and, together, they wrought a small mound with it. Satsuki looked around after a moment, and she saw that the small beach they were in was enclosed by tall walls of white rock. She didn't notice them before, but she liked them; they made her feel somehow safer, closer to her little sister, who was all focused on building the best and tallest castle they could.

Ryuuko seemed younger, too. Not that much that she noticed it since the beginning, because one of the most noticeable signs of a dreamscape was her or Ryuuko's different age; she appraised her to be about sixteen. Her breasts were less pronounced, too, and her body, tough firm and toned, showed less signs than usual.

Satsuki moved a hand toward her, and, pushing away her sand-covered hands, she pulled down her swimsuit and revealed her chest; there she saw the old wound from where she inserted the two halves of Bakuzan to free her from Junketsu, in another life, in another time. Even in her dreams, a constant remained.

“Sis...” Ryuuko's face was flushed, and she was looking down at Satsuki's hands on her chest. Satsuki read a bit of shock in her voice, but not rejection.

Yet another difference.

So she made Ryuuko about sixteen in this dream; did that mean she could...

Satsuki let go of her swimsuit, then she grabbed Ryuuko's face between her hands and put a lingering kiss on her lips; it tasted of salt.

When she let go to take a breath, Ryuuko was flushed to her ears, and looking down, but she had the smallest smile on her lips.

“You shouldn't do this to me, sis,” her subconscious told her through Ryuuko's lips. So Satsuki decided to make it stop by kissing her again; she closed her eyes and drew in her scent this time. A scent of malt and lemons, of fresh leaves and warm hugs, of broken glances and first, shy kisses under the night sky; a whole life, every time anew.

“Let's swim,” Satsuki said after a while, and looked down between Ryuuko's breasts, where she left a few sand stains.

They swam. The water was warmer and denser than Satsuki remembered sea had any rights to be, but it was nice anyway; she heard the crystalline laughter of Ryuuko, like an echo between the water sprays, and it made her laugh too, a little.

They swam. The sun settled and died, and they swam, never tired, as the night sky drew itself upon them like a curtain; and Satsuki played with her sister a few times, and she kissed her when she felt like it was the time to do so; Ryuuko always responded, and once or twice she kissed her too on her own.

It was a peaceful dreamscape; Satsuki didn't wish for Ryuuko's body, not that time, and she was content of the taste of her lips against her own; every time she felt like she could remember it forever, and every time she found herself wondering if she remembered it right. So she went again to hug her sister from behind, take her head and tilt it gently towards hers, and taking a dip into that deep and dark ocean.

This time, Satsuki realized bit by bit, as the sun danced in and out in the sky and they swam in the shallow waters, this time she only wanted to savour the illusion she had always been like this; she had always seen the regretful, yet longing, look in Ryuuko eyes every time she drew another kiss from her lips. They weren't kisses where lust was at home, yet she could see its footsteps; lust always lingered in the ground of their kisses, an aftertaste, an afterthought, always too strong to be pushed away, too feeble to stoke a flame that wasn't sure what to burn.

Satsuki felt content for a long time, before they came out of the water and chased each other on the sand, until Ryuuko finally clamped her arms against her back and took her down; their laughter echoed against the walls of the bay, and they kissed again.

When Satsuki opened her eyes again, Ryuuko lay on top of her; the sensation of her breasts against her own was distracting. Yet she noticed that the walls of the bay were much closer; and that the sandy beach was filled with oysters; Ryuuko took one of them between her hands, slowly opened it and drank the water inside, licking her lips afterwards.

Satsuki felt a cold voice pass through her flesh; she was getting used to the abrupt changes that filled the dreamscape whenever her control over it began to subside, either to her subconscious or to the end of that dream cycle. In the latter case, shifts to the next one or to wakefullness were calm, like a blanket slowly being pulled off her head; in the former, it was more like a blanket being shred.

Ryuuko tilted her head towards her, and with the oyster opened up in her hands, she offered it to Satsuki.

“You shouldn't have kissed me, sis.”

Satsuki took the oyster; it was cold and the shell was hard against her fingers.

“You shouldn't have done this to me, sis.”

The oysters that covered the sand began to clatter, open up and closed down, time and time again; to Satsuki's ears it sounded like wet hands, clapping into a room. The moon above shivered.

“Why do you kiss me, sis, why do you kiss me sis?”

Ryuuko took Satsuki's neck in her hands, kneading it slowly. She put a kiss on her forehead.

It was about to start. The shift. Guilt and regret took over.

“Why do you kiss me, sis, why do you want to kiss me, sis, like this, like this?”

Ryuuko kissed her; her lips were salty and hard against Satsuki's mouth. They cut through. Ryuuko tilted her head back and Satsuki saw her lips bruised; she also felt something cold and hard against her mouth. It was a oyster shell, fused with her mouth.

“Why do you kiss me, if it is bad?”

Ryuuko kissed her again; Satsuki tried to push her away, but she felt her arms being bent without effort by the simple weight of Ryuuko's body. She fell and was pinned down on the beach; the wet clapping was a dull chorus.

Ryuuko pulled away, and under the white light of the moon Satsuki saw her lips cut; blood spilling from her mouth. She smiled, and cuts opened.

“Why do you kiss me, if it hurts?”

Ryuuko leaned forward once again, and Satsuki tasted the iron-like blood as it spilled into her mouth.

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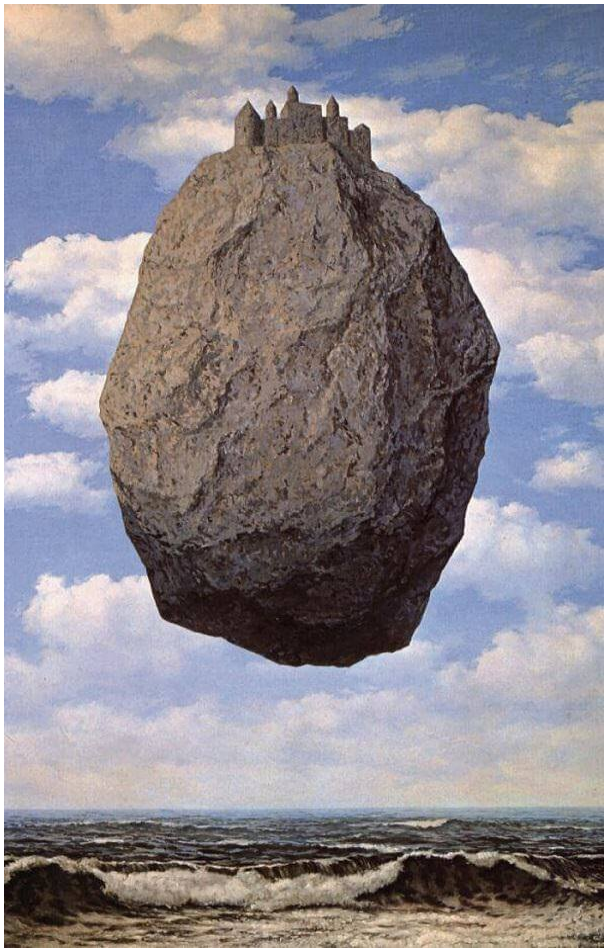
In time, Satsuki would learn to tell dream and reality apart.

But not to choose between them.

Build Your House On The Rock

I

Build Your House On The Rock



Ryuuko breathed in the sea. She gurgled, and her yelp of surprise and disgust as salt took over her mouth was swallowed by water; she broke its surface with wild arms, sputtering, as she waited for air to come back into her lungs. The sea.

Why was she into the sea? She couldn’t remember.

Whatever. She turned to see the silver line of the shore, and bit by bit, she swam there, where the tides could hold her no more, and expectorated the rest of the liquid; the taste of salt in

her mouth was resilient, though.

She blinked and took her wet hair out of her forehead. Night. Sand. Seashore. Full moon. And in her left hand, a red thread. She came here to do something. Ripples of memory wobbled inside the pond of her confused mind, sent from the passage of a large and unknown beast, of which she could only glimpse parts. Whatever… part one was enough; she would go on from there.

Ryuuko stood up to squeeze her clothes; droplets formed small craters on the sand around her. A bit better, but she was still damp. Part one was... the house. This she remembered. There was supposed to be a house here. Somewhere around on this shore. A house. She had to reach the house. Ryuuko turned around, and under the light of the moon the shore revealed its secrets: a few bushes here and there, as if the place had been left to itself for some time, untouched by human hands or flocks of tourist in the summer. Small stones, here and there, hiding behind their own shadows, no sign of footsteps in the sand. Turning back towards the sea, Ryuuko followed the line of the shore until it broke against a large, black shape which cut itself out from the night: a rock, a rock coming out of the sea, and on top of it, she saw something that resembled, even far away as it was, a building, with a few windows lit of a pale light, like curious eyes looking into the night on top of slender towers. Hard to miss something like that.

Still damp, with the cold biting down on her flesh with every step, Ryuuko walked on the sand – after a few steps she took out her white shoes and let her naked feet breathe, each footstep crisp against the shore – ad she approached the rock and the castle, following the red thread that from her hand pointed towards the rock and the building.

There was supposed to be a way up, a way in; she recalled somebody telling her so. Who? Why? Not that she could tell. She had fragments of memories, broken and sharp-edged, with no frame. The red thread lifted itself from the sand as she walked towards the castle; she coiled it around her hand. The red thread was important. For sure. It was important she followed it. At the other end of the thread there was the reason she was there.

Wherever that might be… a question for another day. There was something in the place she was in, something that said her she'd been there before, like she was retracing her own deep steps in the sand. But in front of her the beach was intact, and the trail of footsteps only extended behind. All in all, it mattered not. She was there to do something important. Something important... maybe she'd remember what it was when she'd enter the castle. Ryuuko lifted her eyes. Closer now. Her damp clothes weighed her down. She'd like to take them off. Inside the castle she could take them off. She could have them dried. She had to enter the castle. It was important.

Ryuuko crossed the edge of the rock's shadow, and the moon hid behind it. The red thread in her hand grew with each step, it now covered the entirety of her palm. The red thread was important. She walked around the rock until she found a set of stairs, a snake of angles eaten by seemingly countless years of rain and waves, which coiled around the rock; she couldn't see its head from below. The first step seemed solid. The second one too. The red thread beckoned her to walk on the back of the serpent, and so Ryuuko did. Maybe when she'd come to the end of it she'd have part two of her broken memories. Maybe they waited for her just behind that corner. Maybe the next. Maybe the next one.

The snake's back gave now towards the sea, and Ryuuko looked down, where only a rim of foam signalled where the edge of the waves broke against the rock. The sea whispered broken words to her ears, but they only brushed against them, and she couldn't grasp their meaning. Ryuuko kept on walking. She followed the snake's back through three of its coils, and with each of them she found herself a little more farther from the sand, a little more farther from the sea. Past the third coil, she couldn't distinguish the sea's breath from her own.

She left behind the fourth coil, and she set her eyes upon the castle; it cast a little light on the rocks' edges, drawing them out from the night. Ryuuko could see its shape, if still vague; a bastion in the centre, imposing its shape to the building, and four smaller towers at its angles. It reminded her of something. She blinked. It reminded her of her sister. She blinked again, as inside her mind a few more fragments came into the light.

This was Satsuki's castle.

Into her mind. She was inside her sister’s mind.

This – this whole place – was Satsuki's mind. She was inside her mind. She had to find her. It was important. No, more than that, it was imperative she find her sister, and soon. The newfound urgency pressed on her mind.

Still, Ryuuko took a moment to take a few looks around. If this was Satsuki's mind, it was bleak. She could expect the moon, and the night, and the castle. But what of the sea, and the sand? She never thought Satsuki had any relevant ties to water. Her sister's mind. And yet, the rock under her hands felt hard, their surface rough, or harsh might have been a better word – with small holes that titillated her fingers where salt punctured it. She drew a breath, and the air was damp, but cleaner than it had ever been at Honnouji. It was real. Questions bloomed. But time was short. She'd find more answers following the red thread.

Ryuuko followed it until it brought her in front of the castle's doors; there was the tiniest sliver of golden light between them. Ryuuko put her hands on the metal – cold, wet metal – and pushed. The door gave in, without a sound. A blanket of warmer air welcomed her inside. Behind the doors, a large corridor opened. The only light came from a row of braziers, which showed tall columns, but little more. She tugged with her left hand, and saw the red thread proceeding further into the darkness ahead.

Ryuuko turned and closed the doors behind her; then she walked towards one of the braziers and slip out of her clothes – it took her a bit of work to do so without letting go of the red thread, but after a few more moments she got rid of the blouse, the shirt, skirt and shoes, and she let them around the fire. Her bra and panties were wet too.

Ryuuko looked around. Only darkness looked back. Well, not like her sister would mind. Bra and panties followed into the pile, and Ryuuko welcomed the warm air with the wholeness of her body. The fire danced in front of her, and she moaned as it licked away the water, leaving her dry and warm. Better. Better. Tempting. Her tired legs ached for a bit of sleep by the firelight, but the red thread in her hand would allow no such thing. As soon as her hair and clothes were dry, she'd follow it into the darkness.

The Ivory Gate

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

II

The Ivory Gate

"Two gates the silent house of Sleep adorn;
Of polish'd ivory this, that of transparent horn."

Satsuki Kiryuuin

In retrospect, Ryuuko blamed herself. She ignored the signs until it was too late. Or maybe, it would be better to say that she chose not to believe them. So that, when she'd find Satsuki tired, having said next to nothing after a long afternoon with her and Mako and the others, when she'd caught her eyes wandering around, as if they were looking for some dusty corner where to lay down and sleep, and she'd ask what was wrong, she'd let herself being lulled into a false sense of security by Satsuki's warm smiles, and her reassurances. *She was just tired*. *She was just feeling a bit down today*. *It was nothing*.

And now, look where those reassurances brought her: standing next to a bed, with her sister's still body laying on it, her black hair a black halo on white sheet, white dress on Satsuki's white skin, and red tubes that bit into her skin and supplied her with some other liquid, of which Ryuuko grasped if not the name at least the function to keep her sister fed and alive, for all the time it took her to return.

Ryuuko moved her eyes away from Satsuki's unmoving form; she rested her gaze for a while on Iori and Inumuta – in time she learned their names as well – as they typed and looked at the screens and at each other. They were looking for something, something that wasn't there,

and Ryuuko barely tolerated the invasion of her sister's body with their tubes and probes and electrodes and whatever: only because it kept her alive.

Turning her gaze on her left, Ryuuko glanced at Nonon; the little shit held between her hands what once had been a pink hat, and now only the colour bore memory of its function, ripped and cut and shredded by the action of those tiny hands; Nonon was biting her lips, no words coming out them. The poor little brat didn’t even know how to handle this.. Maybe she had been too harsh on her when they first met at Satsuki's bed. Maybe Ryuuko had let a few words too many escape her mouth out of pain and anger and fear. Maybe one day she’d apologize.

On Nonon’ side, Sanageyama did nothing but, from time to time, holding her shoulders, which he left after a few moments, like they were searing hot and he couldn't withstand it too long; he kept on looking around, just like Ryuuko did, and clenching his fists.

They were all there, lost, like planets on uncharted orbits, devoid of the pivot until them holding them all together.

Ryuuko felt a hug coming from behind; she managed a smile when Mako's head rested on her shoulder, puffed cheeks and large rings around her eyes. For once, she said nothing – could it also be because she run out of words in the past six hours? – but Ryuuko was content to have her on her back, like some sort of warm, cozy human backpack.

“Where's Gamagoori," asked Ryuuko, in part to detach her thoughts from the still form on the bed.

"In the hallway, I think? I hope he feels a little better, Ryuuko dear," she said with a voice like crumpled paper.

"I'll go check on him. Stay with Satsuki with me for a while."

Ryuuko patted on Mako's head, stood up and nodded, in apology, at Nonon; as she exited the room she saw Nonon take her place next to Satsuki, and she repressed her emotions.

She owed her at least this after yelling so much.

And she was Satsuki’s oldest friend after all…

As for Satsuki’ second oldest friend, Gamagoori was in the hallway, similar to an old statue left there for centuries; he rested his hands on his knees and looked up and away, but he turned his head at Ryuuko's coming.

"Any news," he asked. How similar was his voice to Mako's, like grains of gravel.

"She's stable."

Gamagoori nodded and spoke no more; after a while, Ryuuko left him and walked outside. How odd, she thought, she was met by the night already; a clear night, a night of feverish stars and whispers rustling ashore. Satsuki's house was a top of a cliff, and she saw the white sands extend into the sea below, like stocky fingers; the cliff on which Ryuuko found herself standing looked like a wing, enclosing one of the largest isles of sand below with another cliff, not that far away; though steep, there was a set of stairs leading there. How many times must Satsuki have been in the same position as here, looking down and far away, towards the sea that rustled at the horizon, shivering under the coldness of the moon. While she lived with Mako, and went home with Mako, and paid little to no mind to Satsuki's conditions. Living her own life. Giving her sister space. To recover.

Never would she… Satsuki couldn’t…

She gnawed on her regret for a while, like an old wolf on a wound, thinking about the freezing fear that struck her when she first saw Satsuki on her bed, motionless and appearing dead, only a tiny breath from time to time signalling she was still with them. Against that fear, against that, she could do nothing but eat away at her fingers and yell at Nonon. She hated being powerless, she hated it beyond anything else. It felt like she was in a cage, its bars the hotter the closer she moved to them.

She would do anything to get Satsuki back.

She would tell Mako she'd stay at the house, and would ask kind hospitality to Satsuki's butler, just so that she could hold her hand by the bedside. School was over. Little to do anymore but to take care of what was left of her family. The others would understand it. And she would reserve a place for others at Satsuki's bedside, a special one for Nonon. She woul-

"Miss Matoi," asked a voice behind her, and Ryuuko turned to see Satsuki's butler; his body, always so still, betrayed anxiety by the jittery way he pointed at the house and took Ryuuko's shoulder in his hand, "they have been asking for you."

Ryuuko ran like the wind.

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A few moments later she entered a changed room; gone was the resigned atmosphere, the silence. Nonon, Gamagoori and Sanageyama pressed their bodies against Inumuta's and Iori's, their voices intermingling in a waterfall of which Ryuuko could make out little if anything. Only Mako was still at Satsuki's bedside, holding her stillborn hand.

"Hey," tried Ryuuko, but Satsuki's friends paid her no mind, busy as they were yelling at each other, "hey!" she said louder, still with no result. "*Stop*!" she yelled at last stomping her foot on the floor. A web of small cracks opened beneath it, and the five of them jumped and turned their eyes towards Ryuuko and the small cloud of debris covering her leg. Inumuta was the first to react. He set his glasses straight and opened his mouth.

"I suggest we listen to Matoi's request."

Like a fist opening, five people stood apart from each other. Gamagoori sat down on the floor, and looked away.

"Now, if I can finish my explanation without being assaulted," Inumuta said after a moment, turning his laptop to show them diagrams and lines of which Ryuuko couldn't make the least sense, "and please remember that I didn't want to insult any one of you, this is the sleep cycle of Lady satsuki, measured for the past fourteen hours. Each of these valleys is a REM phase, one in which she's dreaming. We thought she was in a coma, but people in a coma don't have REM cycles. Thus..."

Iori spoke after him, looking at Satsuki's form on the bed.

"... thus, we think, she's in some sort of deep meditative state. She's too deep in it for us to reach her, and that was why we thought she could be in a coma; the machinery I built into her bed is making us able to sort of *see* what's happening into her mind… it follows cycles, but it doesn't seem threatening. The good news here is that we know she's fine. The bad news is that this is unprecedented, and..."

Ryuuko watched Iori shake his head. She felt like plunging down to the bottom of a deep well.

"... we have no idea how to treat it."

"*What*? But you sa-"

"Nonon, I said I had identified the problem, not how to cure…"

"There *must* be a way to help Lady Satsuki!"

"I think…"

"Quiet!" Ryuuko's voice was sufficient this time to calm them down. She passed a hand through her lock. Think. Think. Think. REM. Sleep. Dream. There was something… something… "Iori."

"Yes?"

"You said your gizmo could *see* into her dreams?"

"Sort of. It can project a simulation of Lady Satsuki's mental state."

“Good. Can you… project it back?”

“I beg your pardon?”

It was in times like those that Ryuuko regretted not paying enough attention in science class. She lifted her hands.

“You said Satsuki’s mind…” she opened her left hand, “you’re, you know, projecting it. Can you project it back? Can you… send some signals in?”

Iori’s eyes, behind his orange visor, sparkled with insight. He scratched her chin for a few tense seconds, as Ryuuko tried to hear what he could say over the thundering beats of her heart. *Please*...

“Theoretically.”

“Good enough.”

“But any message would be immediately crushed against Lady Satsuki’s overwhelming mental strength. A Kamui at full power like Junketsu couldn’t withstand it. I strongly doubt a line of code can…”

“That’s not a problem,” Ryuuko said. She had a plan. She could do this.

“Lady Matoi. It would be like sending a message in a bottle at the bottom of the sea.”

“We’re not sending a message. We’re not sending a Kamui.” Ryuuko lifted her thumb and pointed at herself. “We’re sending me.”

***

It was amazing what good teamwork and strong motivation could do to Satsuki's friends. In a few minutes, they turned from a moping group into an efficient building machine, and two hours past Ryuuko's declaration, she found herself strapped against a chair, next to Satsuki's bed. With her right hand she was cupping Satsuki's left one. With her left one, she held Mako's.

"It's going to be okay," Ryuuko assured Mako with a large smile she didn't feel she could truly believe in, "it's just going to be like that time you and Senketsu freed me from that Junketsu creep, remember? The same thing."

"Yes, but…" Mako's large, pleading eyes were already shaded by tears. Ryuuko didn't have much time before the floodgates opened and Iori's machinery was ruined.

"Listen," Ryuuko said in her most serious tone, "As much as I'm sure my sister's mind is a nice place, I am going back for sure. I'll bring Satsuki back and we'll laugh at this all together."

"Do… do you promise?"

"I promise."

Mako bit her lip, then blinked. A large smile dawned on her face like the first sunlight after winter.

"You promised! Then I'm sure you will!"

“Yeah yeah. I will. Get some of those mystery croquettes ready!”

“At once!” Mako saluted and left for the kitchen, full of energy and happiness once again, like Ryuuko had flipped a switch. “Have a nice trip inside Lady Satsuki’s mind!”

“I will,” Ryuuko answered, and then, when Mako was out of the room, she whispered to herself: “I hope.”

“All right,” Iori interrupted, pointing at the door, “everybody out. I have to connect Lady Matoi to the machine and I need silence. Shoo!”

One by one, the butler, Gamagoori, Sanageyama, and even Nonon obeyed, though the little shit of course had to make a fuss about it all.

“Why is the transfer student the one to do this, I should do this…” she muttered under her breath. To which, Gamagoori put one of his huge hands on her shoulder, encompassing everything down to her hip in a kind gesture. “Because she’s the strongest among us,” he said matter-of-factly. “I wouldn’t leave Lady Satsuki’s life in any other hands.”

And with those words, the room was empty, save for Iori, Ryuuko, and Satsuki.

A moment of silence passed as the door closed.

“Okay,” Ryuuko said, clenching her fists. “Let’s do this.”

Iori nodded and started to apply electrodes to Ryuuko’s head. They were cold and wet against her skin. Itchy, but she resisted the urge. She had more important things to worry about. Each feeble pulse she felt in Satsuki’s wrist might be the last.

“I didn’t want to say this in front of the others,” Iori intruded her worried thoughts, “but for the record, Lady Matoi, this is madness. You are going to enter Lady Satsuki’s mind

unprotected, unprepared."

"I have seen worse."

"With the utmost respect, you have not. You will find yourself with no map, no way in or out.
"

"I'll just… you know, wake up? You pinch me and I come back."

Iori's lips were a grim line.

"It is not that easy, Lady Matoi. Waking up a mind is one thing. Waking up a mind inside another… you could implode under Lady Satsuki's mind pressure, or be shattered in a million pieces. Or you could simply… *lose* yourself in there."

Ryuuko blinked. All right. She wasn't getting scared.

"I will find a way."

"There's more. You might not have all of your memories once in."

"What?"

"You have heard me. You might lose parts of yourself just by entering. And it's likely Lady Satsuki would not recognize you. She might… see you as a threat. Try to hurt you."

"She's my *sister*."

“She might not know it.”

Ryuuko bit her lips. Great. Great. Still, she didn’t let go of her sister’s hand.

“See if I care. I wanted to know her when I didn’t know she *was* my sister. I’m not going to let memory, time or mortal danger stand in our way.”

Iori’s lip curled up in a smile.

“I wouldn’t have expected any other answer.”

“So, when does this sta-”

Iori flicked a switch, and all was a thundering of colours and shape, and then Ryuuko fell into black, and then into wind, and then, with a mighty splash, she fell into a moonlit sea.

Chapter End Notes

Have you ever felt like a nagging thought, like a toothache you keep on hitting with your tongue, always there, never leaving?
This story is a bit like this to me. Always resurfacing. It wants to be written. it wants to be read. I feel like I won't be freed of Ryuuko and Satsuki if I don't do as they say. And they are asking for one more story.

I think I owe them.

Welcome back to Dreamscape. Fasten your seatbelts.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!